

## Signal Soldiers Keep Fallujah Camps Online

By Spc. Al Barrus  
122nd MPAD

FALLUJAH, Iraq -- The U.S. Army is one that communicates. Taking advantage of everything from telephones, radio and the Internet is how a fighting force stays on top. In Fallujah, it's how the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division fights the good fight, and does it well. Company B, 13th Signal Battalion is the unit that makes it happen.

"One of the things that makes our Army so strong is we are able to do more with less," said Capt. Robert Seal, Company B commander 13 SIG. "With this technology we can communicate and see each other on the battlefield."

Thanks to the troops who set up the antennas, satellite dishes, computer networks and more, communications are loud and clear throughout the Army's role in Fallujah, Seal said.

With the systems in place, the ground troops can not only see where they are in the city, but where their teammates are, he said.

"A good day is a very bor-

ing day," he said. "That means nothing broke and our customers are happy."

Some systems rarely break down, he said. But others are known to have regular problems, and the system can always be improved.

"We have to fine tune the signal and make sure it strong," said Spc. Blake Criswell, a network systems operator with B Co. "It will affect how well you can hear the phones, and how fast data will pass through the computers."

When there is nothing to fine tune or maintain some of the Soldiers in Company B find other ways to help people communicate.

"The Marines next door have it a lot harder than us," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Stephen, a section chief in Company B, 13 SIG. "Till we came out here, some of them hadn't called their families in a couple months. So we hook them up with a ... phone when they ask. Now they can talk to their wives and kids back home."

In the field and on the 'lines,' Company B is proud to keep the troops in Fallujah in touch.



By Spc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD

Sgt. Jonathan Jenney, a network systems operator, Company B, 13th Signal Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, troubleshoots faults in his tactical satellite van. He makes adjustments to improve phone and Internet communication between Fallujah and Baghdad.

## Soldier With 'Don't Quit' Attitude Excels in Iraq

By 1st Lt. Andy Blanton  
1-82 FA Public Affairs

BAGHDAD -- If you ask Spc. Demontiz Brooks of Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion 82nd Field Artillery (1-82 FA) what three words best describe him he will tell you "determined, outgoing and confident." After spending a short amount of time with him and talking to Soldiers in his platoon, you know that he's absolutely right.

"Brooks is my go-to man in the platoon whenever tough missions come up," Brook's platoon leader, 1st Lt. Dan Fouch

said."

Fouch remembers one particular mission when the platoon searched area farms for countless hours attempting to locate bomb-making material.

"Brooks moved some hay that day," Fouch said. "He was the first one in and the last one out, like he always is."

"I credit my 'don't quit attitude' to my mother," Brooks said.

His mother, Freddie Brooks, works as a custodian at the North Sunflower County hospital and, according to Brooks, always taught him that hard work and determination could get him somewhere. While

attending Drew High School in Drew, Miss., Brooks was an all-around athlete playing basketball, football, baseball and track & field. While Brooks loved playing strong safety for the Drew Eagles, it wasn't until he joined the Army that he started heeding his mother's advice.

"The Army showed me some things that as a civilian I took for granted," he said.

Brooks enlisted in the Mississippi National Guard at age 17 and briefly served with the 116th Field Artillery before

Continued on Page 2

# Family, Positive Attitude Help Soldier Through Tour

Continued from Page 1

going on active duty after high school. Brooks' first assignment brought him to Fort Hood, Texas and the 1-82 FA Dragon Battalion where he has been ever since. During preparation for Operation Iraqi Freedom Brooks felt both anxious and excited.

"I wanted to see what the big talk was all about," Brooks said. "I wanted to see what I could do to make a change in the world."

However, when the 1st Cavalry Division was slated to stay behind and prepare for Operation Iraqi Freedom II, Brooks experienced a few changes.

The first of these came when Brooks' artillery unit found out it would leave its Paladin cannons behind and learn infantry tactics better suited to the situation in Iraq.

Staff Sgt. Jamie Crankfield leads Brooks' squad and praised his ability to learn new tactics.

"Once we got in country he embraced the infantry role and became a real leader among the enlisted Soldiers in the battery," Crankfield said.

The second and probably the most profound change in Brooks' life came just before deployment when his wife, Latoya, gave birth to Ta'aka Brooks, a baby girl.

"I left my daughter when she was a week old," he said. "It gave me a new perspective. I wanted to take care of business now, for her future."

Brooks has dealt with the separation from his family by calling his wife every day, and about once a week his wife is able to go to a friend's house and communicate via web camera. He said the web camera really helps him keep up with Ta'aka.

"When I left I could almost fit her in my hand," he said. "When I get home she'll be walking."

Brooks' experiences and attitudes while serving in Eastern Baghdad have



By 1st Lt. Andy Blanton, 1-82 FA Public Affairs

Spc. Demontiz Brooks hands out treats to Iraqi children while on a mission. Brooks serves with Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion 82nd Field Artillery, 1st Cavalry Division and is stationed in Eastern Baghdad.

varied. He describes the first time he came under fire as scary and exciting at the same time. "The first thing I did was check myself all over," he said. "Then I thought I can't believe they shot at me. Then I turned back around and started shooting back. I've never felt adrenaline like that."

In the same neighborhood on different day, Brooks can be seen handing out candy to crowds of children.

"I love the kids over here, I really do," he said. "Some things they ask for I can't give, but I always try to give them whatever I can get from the care packages people send us. Being over here and seeing what they have has indeed given me a new perspective."

Brooks looks forward to returning to the United States and reuniting with his family, but since he recently reenlisted to stay in the Army until 2010 Brooks has also been facing the prospects of returning to Iraq on a future deployment. He admits the separation from his family will be hard, especially since his wife, Latoya, is also in the Army and is slated to deploy soon after he returns. But, Brooks remains overly positive about his mission in Iraq.

"I expect running water in houses, electricity all of the time instead of some of the time, females being able to walk the streets and more friendliness toward Americans... A better Iraq," he said. "I'm glad I could be a part of it."

## Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

**That's outrageous!**  
**haaza junoonee!**

**Tuesday**  
High: 64  
Low: 48



**Wednesday**  
High: 60  
Low: 42



**Thursday**  
High: 60  
Low: 42



Weather information provided by 1CD Staff Weather Office (SWO)

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## News Notes

### The Kids Didn't Like the Meatloaf

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) -- A cafeteria food fight on "meat loaf day" led to the suspension of the entire eighth-grade class at a Memphis school. The students were suspended after refusing to clean up the mess they caused. "Given an opportunity first to apologize for their behavior and help with the cleanup, most of the class refused to cooperate," school spokesman Vince McGaskill said. The food fight broke out Wednesday at Geeter Middle School, which has 637 students in grades six through eight. The cause of the disturbance was not immediately known.

### Turkey Won't Be Told What to Do

WHITTIER, Iowa (AP) -- Commuters say a wild turkey nicknamed Jake is causing a daily traffic hold up in this eastern Iowa city. Jake stations himself next to the road, ready to run off any vehicle that slows down for a better look, said Melissa Davidson, who lives nearby. "He's out here every morning," she said. "People get out of their cars to shoo him off the road, and he just circles the cars. It's really funny to watch. He's not afraid of people." Davidson said Jake started causing the traffic interruptions about two months ago. He roosts in trees behind her next-door neighbor's home.

## "Gentle Giant" Finds Way Back, Helps Others

SEATTLE, Wash. (*Seattle Times*) -- The man in the tattered green coat is obviously drunk - and obviously unhappy.

He has just been asked to leave a downtown homeless shelter where drunkenness is against the rules.

Polite but firm, the 6-foot-5, 270-pound Haywood McRae - a man whose boss calls him a gentle giant - repeats himself. "C'mon, sir, you know you can't stay here drunk like that. You know the rules."

For whatever reason, the potential confrontation is over before it begins, and with a shrug, the weaving wanderer heads back out into the night.

McRae, 36, knows the world of alcohol abuse from the inside, and McRae himself is dependent on the Salvation Army for food, shelter and a new opportunity.

For McRae, this job, watching over a 52-bed shelter in a parking garage four nights a week, is a first step back toward a productive life.

A Navy veteran of the first



Seattle Times

Haywood McRae, center, helps run an overnight homeless shelter for men in a parking garage at the King County Administration Building in downtown Seattle. He was down and out himself until he found help at the Salvation Army's William Booth Center.

Persian Gulf War, McRae said his life was a wash of alcohol and crack cocaine from the time he left the service in 1992 until last summer, when he entered a program for veterans housed in the Salvation Army's William Booth Center.

So while one Salvation Army program, the William

Booth Center, gives him a foundation, another - the shelter in the county garage - gives him the responsibility and opportunity of a job.

"The Salvation Army was here for me at the time that I needed it," McRae says simply. "This is one life that they have saved."

## Local YMCA Holds Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

KILLEEN, Texas (*Killeen Daily Herald*) -- In the true spirit of sharing started hundreds of years ago, hundreds of people from the Killeen area came together Sunday to partake in a Thanksgiving feast.

The Armed Services YMCA had its 18th annual Thanksgiving dinner at First United Methodist Church in Killeen for around 450 people.

Thirty minutes before the dinner ended, about 20 of the 25 donated turkeys had been eaten.

ASYMCA President Carlos De Los Santos said the dinner was open to anyone who would like a meal but hoped to reach low-income or homeless residents.

ASYMCA Executive Director Tony Mino said the dinner would help alleviate some of the stress families might feel during the holidays.

"It's a pick-me-up for some of the families who may not know what to do for the holidays," Mino said.

On the other side of downtown, at about the same time, another community was also sharing in an early Thanksgiving organized by the youth of the Killeen NAACP.

Though the facilities at the Killeen Community Housing building were much smaller, about 120 families walked away with a hot meal in their hands.



Killeen Daily Herald

Paul Briton, right, serves stuffing at the 19th annual Thanksgiving dinner sponsored by the Killeen Armed Services YMCA at the First United Methodist Church in Killeen. Enough food was donated to serve 500 people.

Youth also went door-to-door at the Moss Rose housing subdivision and delivered meals to those who couldn't make it out.

CTC NAACP president Yohantis cq Moore said food is an integral part of the Thanksgiving celebration but it is also a time for giving.

"It is more of a blessing to give than to receive," Moore said. "This is a good way to give to the community."

## Busch Makes History with Nextel Cup Win

HOMESTEAD, Fla. (AP) -- Nothing could stop Kurt Busch from winning the closest championship in NASCAR history.

On a day of high drama, with the season championship seemingly changing lap to lap, pass to pass, Busch held on to finish fifth behind teammate Greg Biffle in Sunday's Ford 400 and wrap up his first Nextel Cup title.

He won it by eight points over Jimmie Johnson - a difference of just two places in the season-ending race - and 16 over Jeff Gordon.

"It's an unbelievable deal," Busch said. "This is what a team does to win a championship. They persevere on a day such as this. All year long we've done things like this, whether we put ourselves in a hole or had a small problem. I just can't believe we were able to overcome all that turmoil today.

Johnson and Gordon were disappointed not to be able to dedicate a championship to the 10 people who died Oct. 24 in the crash of a Hendrick Motorsports plane on the way to a race in Virginia. But Busch, whose younger brother, Kyle, drives for Hendrick in the Busch Series, took care of that, too.

"I'm choked up because there nothing harder in the NASCAR community than what we had to go through a couple weeks ago with Hendrick and the problem they had," Busch said. "I love them truly and I want to dedicate anything I can from this championship to them. My little brother was affected by this, so it hit home."



AP  
Kurt Busch kisses his trophy after winning the 2004 Nextel Cup championship Sunday at the Homestead-Miami Speedway in Homestead, Fla.

## In Brief

### Prince William May Join Army

LONDON (AP) -- Prince William would want to fight



on the front line if he were in the British army, but he is not sure whether he will sign up

after graduating from a university, he told British media. William said he was not sure what he would do when he finished studying, but he had considered joining the military. The eldest son of Prince Charles said he might follow in the footsteps of his younger brother Harry, who will enroll at Sandhurst military academy next year. "I would not want to be kept back for being precious, or whatever. That's the last thing I'd want."

### "The King" is Still Making Money

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - Some of Elvis Presley's first RCA recordings from nearly 50 years ago, including never-before-heard takes of "All Shook Up" and "Jailhouse Rock," were put up for bid Sunday at an auction of show business memorabilia. The six unedited reel-to-reel tapes - "pre-master" originals from the private collection of the studio engineer who recorded them, are valued at between \$30,000 and \$50,000. The tapes were made from September 1956 through September 1957 during the singer's initial sessions at RCA, which had bought out Presley's contract from Sun Records for \$35,000.



AP

The NBA has suspended Artest for the rest of the season Sunday, as the NBA came down hard on three members of the Pacers for fighting with fans when a melee broke out at the end of a game against the Detroit Pistons.

## NBA Issues Nine Suspensions

NEW YORK (AP) -- Ron Artest was suspended for the rest of the season Sunday, and two of his Indiana Pacers teammates must miss a total of 55 games for fighting with fans during a melee that broke out at the end of a game against the Detroit Pistons.

Overall, the NBA issued some of the harshest penalties in its history by banning nine players for more than 140 games. Artest's suspension is the strongest ever levied for a fight during a game.

"The line is drawn, and my guess is that won't happen again - certainly not by anybody who wants to be associated with our league," commissioner David Stern said.

Indiana's Stephen Jackson was suspended for 30 games and Jermaine O'Neal for 25. Detroit's Ben Wallace - whose shove of Artest after a foul led to the five-minute

fracas - drew a six-game ban, while Pacers guard Anthony Johnson got five games.

Four players - Indiana's Reggie Miller, and Detroit's Chauncey Billups, Elden Campbell and Derrick Coleman - were suspended one game apiece for leaving the bench during the initial fracas.

All of the suspensions are without pay. Artest will lose approximately \$5 million in salary, while O'Neal's suspension will cost him nearly 25 percent of his \$14.8 million salary for the current season.

"We have to make the point that there are boundaries in our games," Stern said. "One of our boundaries, that have always been immutable, is the boundary that separates the fans from the court. Players cannot lose control and move into the stands."